24:Meulen and Wissmann 1-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Against the walls there are cushions on which to recline. The ugly modernity of mirrors fixed into the ceiling has been introduced into el-Bārr's house. Also, the old Ḥaḍramī colours of rust-red, black and white, which harmonize so well with the brown wood and with the lighter brown mud, have had some ugly new ones added to them.

In order to give pleasure to the family we take some more photographs of grown-ups and children. The household slaves and their jet-black children are with us in the *madjlis*; they serve round coffee and tea and many sweets, and talk with us, but nevertheless remain modestly in the background.

One can see from the many negro types in the streets and plantations that there are a great many slaves in Wādī Dō'an. They are employed for work on the land and as domestic servants.

In the afternoon we did what we could to treat a great number of patients, who came to us to ask for medicines or to have wounds and ulcers attended to. We could do little, however; and what, in any case, is the use of but one treatment? In all Ḥaḍramaut and its surroundings there is only one doctor with a western training. It is again the progressive Sayyid Abū Bakr el-Kāf who has got this young Indian doctor to come here, but his work lies in far-away Terīm. The rich go sometimes to Aden to consult a doctor, and the Mission Hospital at Shēkh 'Uthmān near Aden is also known to a few.

Towards evening I stroll with Sayyid 'Aluwī to Qāret Āl el-Miḥḍār, half an hour distant, where lives Sayyid Muṣṭafā bin Aḥmad el-Miḥḍār, to whom we have a letter from the Vizier at Makalla. Our reception is particularly friendly. The old sayyid has seen something of the world, and he compares life in Wādī Dō'an to sleep, which is something like death. I am urged to talk constantly and the atmosphere grows so friendly that he takes me with him to his other and larger house and shows me all over it, having first, with his own hands, shut in his young wives behind bolted doors and hung the keys on his belt. The wives take their revenge by having a good look at the stranger from the flat roof!

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

he tries to mount it unnoticed. We have seen, however, and call out to him to get off, because we have just dismounted out of pity for the animal. His Yāfiᶜ comrade, who is walking in front of me, calls to him *not* to obey. I angrily bid him be silent, with the remark that I have paid for the donkeys and that, consequently, the command over them lies with me. At his insolent reply: "Hold your tongue!", he gets without further ado a box on his ears. He turns in fury, his rifle clenched in his hands.

"Shall I let myself be struck by you?"

"You shall obey me, you are under my command."

ᶜAbdallāh sulkily vanishes into the rear-guard, while we all keep our eyes on his rifle. His comrade comes to me before long to ask forgiveness for him. "Do not be angry with him, he is a little mad." Who can be angry for long with these rough children of nature? Towards evening, when the heat is over and thirst and fatigue no longer torment, both Yāfiᶜ soldiers get their so much desired remuneration and part with the two *Naṣrānīs* as the best of friends.

Close to Hadjarēn we passed a mosque at a saint's grave, and all sought the cool shadow of this place, forbidden to unbelievers. We were allowed to stand for a breathing-space in the porch. There is an earthenware jar full of water in the building, but we may not go inside, so our Makalla soldiers fetch water for us. A few peasant women who are passing by also come for the sake of the shelter. Their wide, dark-blue, rough cotton garments leave their faces uncovered. However, as soon as they see strangers, they draw their head-cloths over their faces. They wear straw hats, with pointed crowns and wide brims, as a protection against the sun.

3. AN UNFORGETTABLE RECEPTION IN HADJARĒN.

From here the way mounts towards the foot of the mountain close up against which lies Hadjarēn. A steep, paved, zigzag path leads at last to the gate of this town, which by

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

its fine strategic position once commanded the great route from the coast to Ḥaḍramaut. Within the gate the streets also mount steeply. The town gives an impression of decay; there are few tall or fine houses, the white colour of prosperity is to be seen on hardly a single one of them; the town is grey-brown as the mountain against which it stands.

We stop in front of a double house that is built over a small side-street. Sayyid Muḥammad bin Sālim bin ʿAbdarraḥmān Āl Qāf, the man to whom we were given an introduction by our host in Dōʿan, is said to live here. The letter is taken in, the door closed again, and we wait in the shadow of the narrow, overarched street. Time passes and we ask ourselves anxiously whether the *Efrendjīs* are perhaps not welcome in this house. No, that is not the case, but a double wedding is being celebrated at this moment, and the house is therefore full of women, who have to be removed and shut up, before our company can be allowed to enter. At last this stage is reached and we are taken to an apartment which shows signs of having been very much inhabited. It is warm there and not clean, and, although we already fill the room, a number of inquisitive people force themselves in. The master of the house himself as well as his snivelling small son appear to have economised water for all other purposes than washing. But his friendly glance and hearty welcome make everything all right at once.

It is perhaps here timely to pay grateful tribute to the wonderful hospitality of the Arabs. Who, in the West, would hide his disappointment at having a wedding feast broken in upon by a whole caravan of tired and hungry men? Who amongst us would immediately throw open his whole house to the travellers, "the sons of the road", himself bring water to slake their thirst, and immediately prepare food to strengthen them?

Life is democratic here. In the reception-room, which is chock-full, sit slaves, servants, children and master all together, who drink out of the same bowl and pour out coffee

24:Meulen and Wissmann T-3 (1931)1932 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

tern bank of the wādī. The fields are bone-dry and trimly cultivated, rain being expected this month. One substantial downpour of rain or a good inundation caused by rain elsewhere is said to be enough for this loam soil, which holds water for so long. Great pains have been taken over the irrigation system; the dams, made of piled-up stones and plastered with an inner lining of mud, suffer much from the *sēls*. Groups of inquisitive people come running towards us out of the villages and ask all sorts of questions of our escort. A grey-headed village-chief turns to us with the inquiry how to put an end to the repeatedly recurring destruction of the stone dykes through the *sēl*. We answer that it would probably suffice if they were to use lime as cement for the boulders: the initial cost of this would be considerable, but it would be a great economy in the long run.

All the women of this district are veiled, even the poor women working in the fields. When working in the sun they wear straw hats with very wide brims. They are not so frightened of us as women were elsewhere and are quite ready for a chat or even to be photographed. The young girls, at the request of the men, climb like cats right up to the crowns of the palm-trees, to pick the ripe fruit from the bunches of dates. Their wide black garments hang untidily about them, the only pretty thing in their dress is the broad girdle ornamented with large and small silver buttons, which encircles the waist. An attempt to buy one of these fails, as the women are all too modest to think of selling a part of their clothing. Many children run all over the place with little bows made of the rib of a palm-leaf, and sharp-pointed arrows of the same, with which they try to kill the few birds that alight on the ripening fruit. Occasionally, as we pass, some relative of one of our escort will present us with a handful of the first really ripe dates.

30: Gt. Britain G-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Hadhramaut MM2

rugs or mats, or on cushions placed around or under the windows. A very low table, or a special circular mat, is put in the middle of the room for meals. Rough but solidly made coffers and cupboards are much used for clothes, silver, books, or domestic utensils. Lighting is by lamps of a very primitive form, which burn petroleum or, more commonly, sesame oil. The walls carry little or nothing of ornament, though the tribesmen sometimes adorn them with their arms, banners, or hunting equipment. A bathroom is usually found on each floor of a house, all being situated one above the other, the waste water running off by pipes through the wall; the apparatus consisting merely of a vessel from which water is poured over the body.

Wheaten or maize bread, dried dates, eggs, and meat (of sheep or poultry), taken in meagre amounts and usually in some form of soup or stew, form the staple foods; rice is not largely eaten; the people on the coast consume much fish; but only the Bedouin ever eat game. Butter, oil, and honey are much used; also spices, onions, and garlic, and much salad and green vegetables. Fruits, with the exception of the date, are considered as delicacies. Coffee is much drunk in the houses between meals, but there are no public cafés. It is customary for all persons paying visits to bring along with them some coffee-beans wrapped in the turban or plaid (*rādi*); when the party is complete these are collected by the host, and the coffee is prepared in the manner common to all the East. Before drinking, the name of Sheikh 'Ali ibn 'Omar esh-Shadhli, whose tomb is at Mocha, is invoked, he being reputed to have been the first to discover the stimulating properties of the berry.

Very few servants are kept in most houses, even in those of the well-to-do; the housework and cooking are done by the housewife and the daughters, with the aid, in case of stress, of help called in from other branches of the family, friends, or neighbours. Only the very rich have slaves, and these are treated more as members of the household than as property; for this reason slaves rarely desire to be freed. All slaves in the Hadhramaut are Moslems; even if they come from a Christian or pagan country, they are forced to embrace Islām. But marriage between free persons and slaves is extremely rare.

Dancing is regarded in the Hadhramaut as permissible, but never among persons of two sexes, and the Seyyids and townsmen usually abstain from it. The music is made by a primitive form of guitar (*qanbus*), a large oblong drum, and three or four small drums, the players often accompanying their music with